

## Previewing the novel and the cards **Snap (Shots of)Judgment**

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Cards and novels. Novels and cards. In the **Magic: The Gathering** multiverse, these two printed forms work together to tell a story. The cards provide the background, using images, card names, game mechanics, and flavor text to set the scene and paint a picture of a fantastic world full of wizards, artifacts, spells, and creatures. The novels, then, fill in that background by delving into the motivations of the characters and describing actions that, as the plot unfolds, often change the face of the world portrayed in the cards.

The fun part (for the fans as well as for the game designers and novel authors) is seeing how the fusion of these two story-telling mediums creates something greater than the sum of their parts -- an immersive experience in the fantastic world of **Magic: The Gathering**. With that in mind, I worked recently with Rei Nakazawa, the **Magic** creative text writer, to pick out images from the *Judgment* card set to help me present some snapshots from the [Judgment novel](#). Think of it as a multi(verse) media experience.

### Breaking Point

*Judgment* picks up right where *Torment* left off. (If you haven't read *Torment*, see "[A Man Named Chainer](#)" for a summary, or better yet, go read the novel.) Kamahl, the brash and strong barbarian warrior-mage, stands over the dead body of Chainer and contemplates the terrible power of the Mirari, the artifact that killed his friend. This power has now fallen to Kamahl to try to control protect from those who would use it again. For perhaps the first time in his life, Kamahl is unsure of himself. Does he have the power to control the Mirari, or will it control him? However, the answer to his question will have to wait. First, Kamahl must escape from Cabal City, which won't be easy with the tattered remains of the Cabal and roaming squads of militant Order soldiers hounding him. The fight for the Mirari begins again even as the ashes of Chainer cool on the floor behind Kamahl. Trial by fire is the barbarian way, though, and Kamahl is up to the challenge. But as he heads home to the Pardic Mountains, leaving his foes on the ground behind him, he is forced to wonder, "Will the fighting ever stop? When will it be enough?"



## Sutured Ghoul



With Kamahl -- and the Mirari -- on the move again, the other factions begin to mobilize. They all want the Mirari for the same reason: power. Laquatas needs the power of the orb to break out of his prison and defeat Llawan. The Order wishes to destroy the orb to maintain its own power over the continent. The Cabal Patriarch merely wants the Mirari back for the games and for the money it will bring to his coffers. Everyone is scheming. Alliances are made and broken, but all know that whoever gets to the Mirari first will have the advantage. So, the Patriarch sends his most trusted summoner along with five

very special assassins on a secret mission: Track Kamahl down and retrieve the orb by any means necessary. So, Braids and her boys head out for Cabal City to pick up the cold trail. Taking the First's instructions to heart, Braids instructs the assassins to kill first and ask questions after. "Leave the throat in at least one. . .," says Braids. "Even zombies can't talk without a larynx. . . ."

## Commander Eesha

News of the assassin squad moving across Otaria soon reaches the desk of the new leader of the Order forces. Commander Eesha, a capable warrior with no love for the Cabal, needs little urging from a recently escaped Laquatas to order her own troops to move toward the mountains. Eesha plans to bring Kamahl to trial, for she blames him for the death of both Pianna and Kirtar. Then she will destroy the "foul orb" once and for all. But is the avenging commander playing right into the elaborate schemes concocted by Laquatas? Probably. Will Laquatas get the better of the Order again? Only time -- and Commander Eesha -- can tell.



## Browbeat

Meanwhile, in the mountains, the power of the Mirari has proven too great for Kamahl to control. In a misguided and arrogant attempt to unite the barbarian tribes to defend the Mirari from Laquatas and the Order, Kamahl has only wrought chaos in the mountains, bringing the tribes to the brink of an all-out civil war. As the Cabal assassin squad draws ever closer and the Order forces amass at the base of the Pardic mountains, Kamahl is too busy planning to wage war against his own people to notice how

close to destruction the Mirari has brought him. Only two people have the power to stop this war, and they have never seen eye to eye on anything, especially when it comes to Kamahl.

### **Jeska, Warrior Adept**

As Kamahl prepares for war, Jeska, his steel-nerved sister, does all she can to stop the madness before it's too late. Realizing that the power of the Mirari has, at the very least, clouded her brother's judgment, Jeska turns to the only person who can possibly help her: Balthor. The two decide they must get the Mirari away from Kamahl, but then fight over who should do it (and how). Jeska convinces Balthor (with a little help from her steel hairpins) that she has to face this challenge alone. But things do not go well for the warrior adept, and Jeska is forced into a challenge match against her brother -- a fight she cannot possibly hope to win.



### **Aven Warcraft**

After the battle with his sister, Kamahl finally realizes what the power of the Mirari has brought down upon him and the barbarians. He sets out on a quest to the Krosan forest to find Seton and, perhaps, some peace from his own Mirari-induced torment. But the forces opposing Kamahl are not going to let him get away again so easily. At the urging of Laquatas, the Order forces pursue Kamahl across the plains, while the Cabal raiders shadow both parties, waiting for their chance to grab the Mirari. What the aven strategic maps don't show, however, are the mer forces waiting in the waterways beneath Krosan. Laquatas's plans appear to be swimming along as Kamahl rides right into the mer's trap, herded along by the unwitting Order soldiers.

### **Telekinetic Bonds**

As three land forces draw closer to an inevitable conflict at the edge of Krosan, war erupts beneath the waves once again. Laquatas has been playing each side against the other in a giant chess match in the mountains and the plains, and he believes he has the entire situation well in hand. But is his information about Llawan and her forces reliable? This critical undersea battle could well determine the outcome of the entire war, and the fate of the



continent hangs in the balance as mer and cephalid battle in the still and dark waters off the coast of Otaria.



## Hunting Grounds

After outrunning the Order forces and somehow eluding the mer ambush, Kamahl enters the forbidding Krosan forest in search of his old friend Seton. But, Laquatas still has at least one trick up his sleeves. The wily mer brokers a risky and fragile coalition between his two allies -- the Order soldiers and the Cabal raiders. These former enemies enter the forest together with but a single purpose: to find Kamahl and retrieve the Mirari. But suspicion and mistrust are not the only problems this uneasy alliance will face in Krosan. The forest predators will

certainly take their toll on the invaders. Soon it won't be a question of which side will emerge with the Mirari, but whether anyone will emerge from the forest at all.

## Thriss, Nantuko Primus

Kamahl finds Seton (or rather the druid finds him), but the barbarian soon realizes that his journey is not over yet. Seton tells Kamahl: "The storm is coming . . . You can either face it with knowledge or run from it in ignorance. Either way, your path lies through the heart of the forest." So, with the combined forces of the Cabal and Order still behind him, Kamahl ventures into the very heart of Krosan - a place so shrouded in mystery it appears only as a black spot on every map of Otaria. No one knows what they will find in the center of Krosan, for no invader has ever penetrated that far into the forest and survived. What will Kamahl find if he makes it that far? As Seton says: "For the answer to that, you will have to ask Thriss."



## The Answers to All Your Questions

Well, I hope you enjoyed this travelogue across Otaria, and if I have raised more questions than I have answered with this little slideshow, then I believe I have done my job well. For you can't expect snapshots of a place (or a novel) to provide the depth of experience you can get from actually visiting the place (or reading the novel) and immersing yourself in that world. *Judgment*, the novel, will be out in May. You will find that more surprises await you between the covers. Then, when the *Judgment* card set comes out, you can look for other people, places, and actions that spark a memory of something you saw in the novel. Enjoy.

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